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ABSTRACT

Seventeen guidelines for reading improvement programs in elementary and secondary schools are presented and discussed in this report. Areas focused upon include needs assessment, implementation, evaluation, philosophy and dissemination. The guidelines are: (1) identify the status of the reading program, including reading problems and program strengths; (2) determine and make public the required and desirable solutions regarding the program; (3) identify alternative strategies to resolve identified reading problems; (4) seek solution strategies; (5) diagnose reading behaviors of students; (6) prescribe instruction for students to remove reading deficiencies; (7) personalize instruction to meet the reading needs, strengths, and interests of individual students; (8) provide continuous opportunity for students to learn to read in all subjects; (9) match instructional facilities, materials and equipment to the reading needs and interests of students; (10) implement proficiency standards in reading for all students; (11) provide inservice education to school staffs which will enable them to perform instructional and management tasks pertinent to the local reading program; (12) modify, if necessary, the reading program to ensure continuous progress in meeting objectives; (13) develop a comprehensive evaluation plan; (14) implement evaluation activities according to plan; (15) develop a comprehensive dissemination of information plan; (16) disseminate reading program information according to plan; and (17) use feedback to bring about change and program renewal. A bibliography is appended to these guidelines. (Author/GC)

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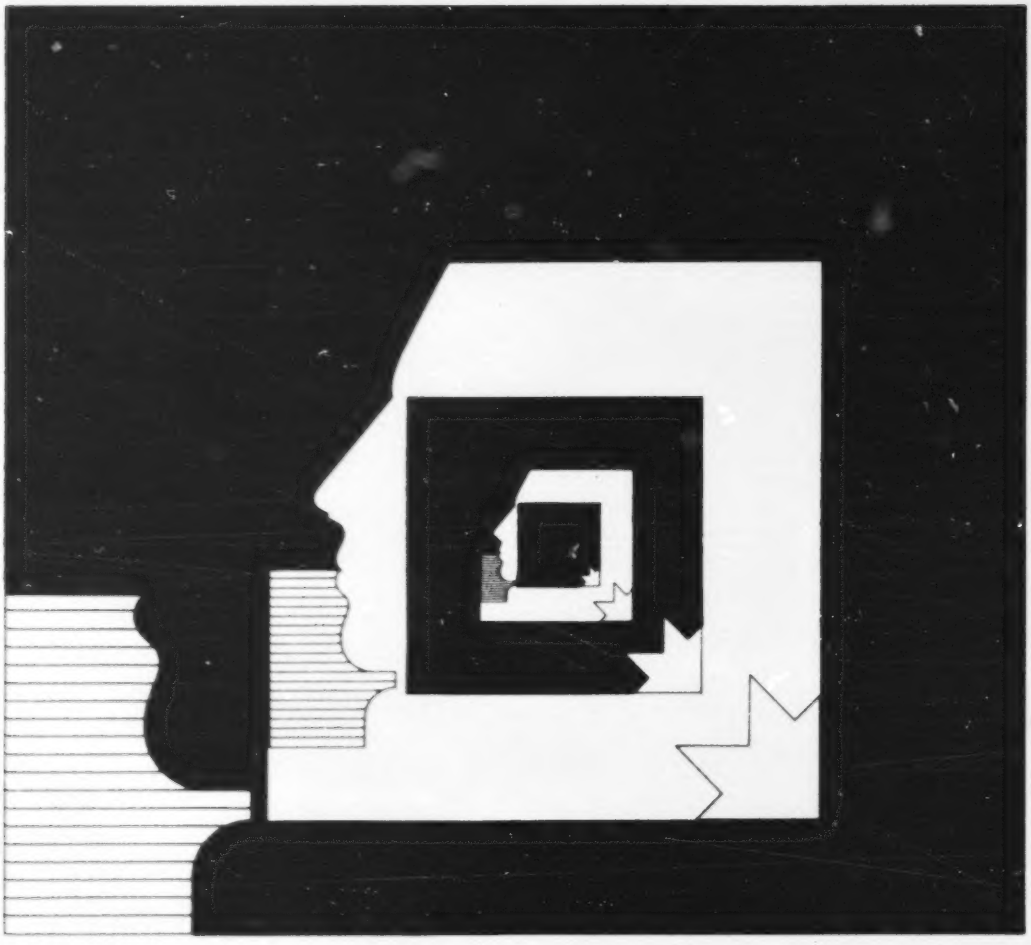

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Sacramento, 1978

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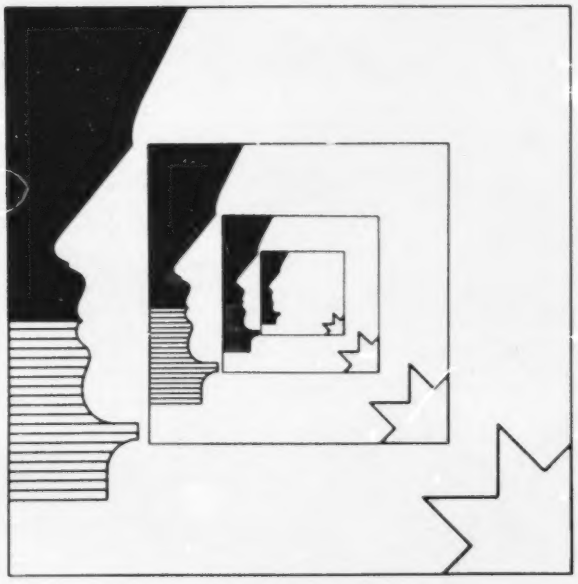
GUIDELINES:
TOWARDS EXCELLENCE IN READING PROGRAMS



Prepared by the
CALIFORNIA RIGHT TO READ OFFICE
Fred Tillman, Director

With the advice of the
STATE READING ADVISORY COUNCIL

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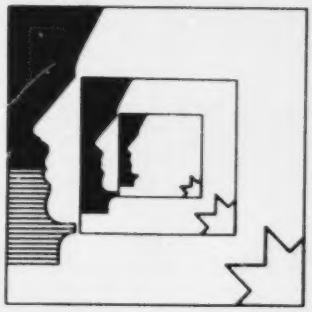

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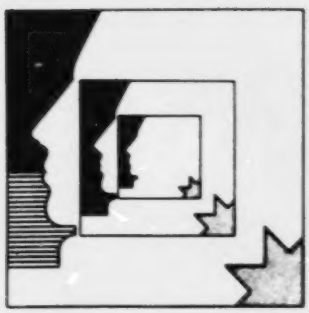

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CALIFORNIA STATE READING ADVISORY COUNCIL

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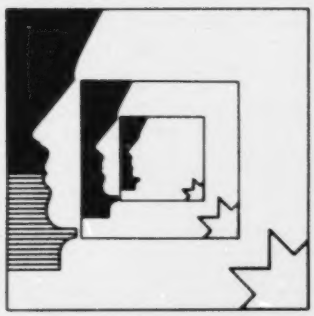
The persons identified above serve on a State Education Commission that is advisory to the State Board of Education. This Commission, the Educational Innovation and Planning Commission, is desirous of improving the implementation of Public Law 93-380, IV, and VII.

Throughout the program year, all persons are encouraged to submit suggestions directly to the Commission for its consideration and recommendation to the State Board of Education.



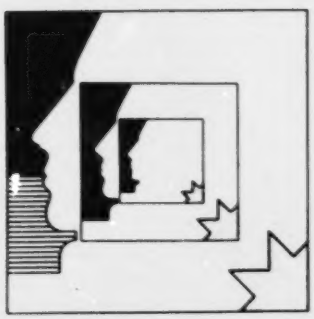
FOREWORD

Reading is the process of discovering meaning in written language. It is a highly complex process that begins with the decoding of written language. The reading process is influenced by the reader's language and experiences, attitude and motivation, sensory perception, and comprehension abilities.

California schools have the responsibility of providing reading programs which equip students with the reading skills required to cope with the practical demands of everyday living and to respond to the responsibilities of various occupations. It is also the responsibility of reading programs to provide effective instruction in the advanced reading skills required to cope with the demands of higher education for students who choose this option. For all students, California reading programs should strive to instill an appreciation of the practical value of being able to read and a genuine sense of enjoyment for reading.

Wilson Riles

Superintendent of Public Instruction



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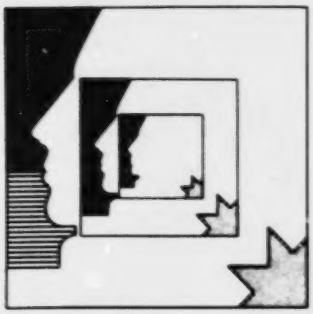
Eve Geiger, Sonoma State College
Jack Jones, California State University, San Luis Obispo
Eleanor Kirkland, California State University, Sacramento
Jim Richmond, California State University, Chico
Robert Ruddell, University of California, Berkeley

In addition, the California Right to Read Office expresses sincere appreciation to the more than 200 educators who responded to the request for information and to those staff members of the California State Department of Education who provided the time and talent needed to prepare the publication.



PREFACE

The California State Department of Education, with the advice of the Educational Innovation and Planning Commission, has developed *Guidelines: Towards Excellence in Reading Programs* for the purpose of providing helpful suggestions to school staffs in planning, implementing, evaluating, and managing reading programs, including reading programs for bilingual and special education students. It is not the Department's intent to prescribe solutions to local reading problems. This position is consistent with the legislative intent of AB 65 school improvement program measures. The *Guidelines* are meant to be used in four ways:

- AS SUGGESTED PROCEDURES FOR SETTING UP NEW PROGRAMS
- AS "BENCHMARKS" AGAINST WHICH EXISTING PROGRAMS CAN GAUGE THEIR STATUS AND PROGRESS
- AS GOALS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF EXISTING READING PROGRAMS
- AS SUGGESTED CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING EXEMPLARY READING PROGRAMS

The goal of the Department is to work in partnership with school districts, parents, teachers, administrators, students, and the community to improve the current status of education. The *Guidelines* are intended to articulate the Department's goal orientation.

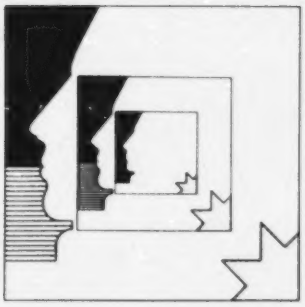
Each of the *Guidelines* is followed by a list of questions which cover significant aspects pertaining to the *Guidelines*. Although this list of questions may be a useful starting point for addressing each of the *Guidelines*, the list is not intended to be comprehensive or exhaustive. It is expected that school staffs using these *Guidelines* will formulate additional questions pertaining to the local school reading program. In addition to the *Guidelines*, which provide an overview of reading program considerations, it is anticipated that *supplementary materials which provide more detailed guidance in planning, implementing, evaluating and managing local school reading programs will be made available to school staffs.*

The improvement of student reading achievement is related to the knowledge which school staffs have of instructional/management practices that work in the classroom. Therefore, it is suggested that those individuals in schools who plan, implement, and evaluate reading programs become cognizant of current research findings. Several of the references which were used in developing the *Guidelines* are listed in the bibliography. In addition, the users of these *Guidelines* are encouraged to contact the Right to Read Office, California State Department of Education, for additional information and technical assistance.

DAVIS W. CAMPBELL
Deputy Superintendent for Programs

CHARLIE MAE KNIGHT
Associate Superintendent
for Elementary Education Programs

FRED TILLMAN
Assistant Superintendent
for Elementary Education Programs
and Director of Right to Read
and Miller-Unruh Reading Programs



CONTENT OF THE GUIDELINES

The content of the *Guidelines* is based upon a four-step "School Approach" model for planning, implementing, evaluating and managing reading programs. The four steps of the "School Approach" model are:

- NEEDS ASSESSMENT
- IMPLEMENTATION
- EVALUATION
- DISSEMINATION

Incorporated into these four steps of the "School Approach" model is a six-step systems analysis model for identifying and solving reading problems. The six steps of this model are:

- Identification of reading problems based upon needs
- Determination of required and desirable solutions and identification of alternative solution strategies
- Selection of solution strategies from among alternatives
- Implementation
- Determination of performance effectiveness
- Revision as required

A MAJOR FEATURE OF THE ADAPTED FOUR-STEP "SCHOOL APPROACH" MODEL IS THE RECOGNITION THAT EACH SCHOOL MAY HAVE A DIFFERENT STARTING POINT IN IDENTIFYING AND RESOLVING READING PROBLEMS.

Consider, as an example of differential starting points, where an existing Early Childhood Education (ECE)/School Improvement Program (SIP) school would fit into this process. Having successfully completed all needs assessment processes and several implementation processes in previous years, the director of such a program might decide that Guideline 10 (implementing proficiency standards in reading) is the appropriate starting point. In contrast, a newly forming SIP school may find it appropriate to begin with Guideline 1 (identifying reading problems). In another variation, an established ESEA Title I school may find that although it has fulfilled most guidelines in all four steps, a few guidelines in each may require additional work.

It should be noted that reading programs designed to serve students of limited English language proficiency should consider the fact that children learn to read only once. When students are taught to read in their native language first, provisions must be made for an adequate study of the appropriate reading methods unique to the particular linguistic makeup of each language group.

THE "SCHOOL APPROACH" MODEL IS INTENDED FOR FLEXIBLE APPLICATION THAT MAKES IT MOST USEFUL FOR EVERY READING PROGRAM.

Guidelines 1 through 4 are intended to assist school staffs in planning the local reading program, including the conducting of a comprehensive needs assessment (step 1 of the "School Approach" model); guidelines 5 through 12 deal with reading program implementation (step 2 of the "School Approach" model); guidelines 13 and 14 address reading program evaluation (step 3 of the "School Approach" model); and guidelines 15 through 17 pertain to the dissemination of reading program information (step 4 of the "School Approach" model).

Prior to addressing the *Guidelines* within the four steps of the "School Approach" model, it is recommended that school staffs, school site councils, students, parents, community people, and others agree on reading program purposes, directions, and outcomes.

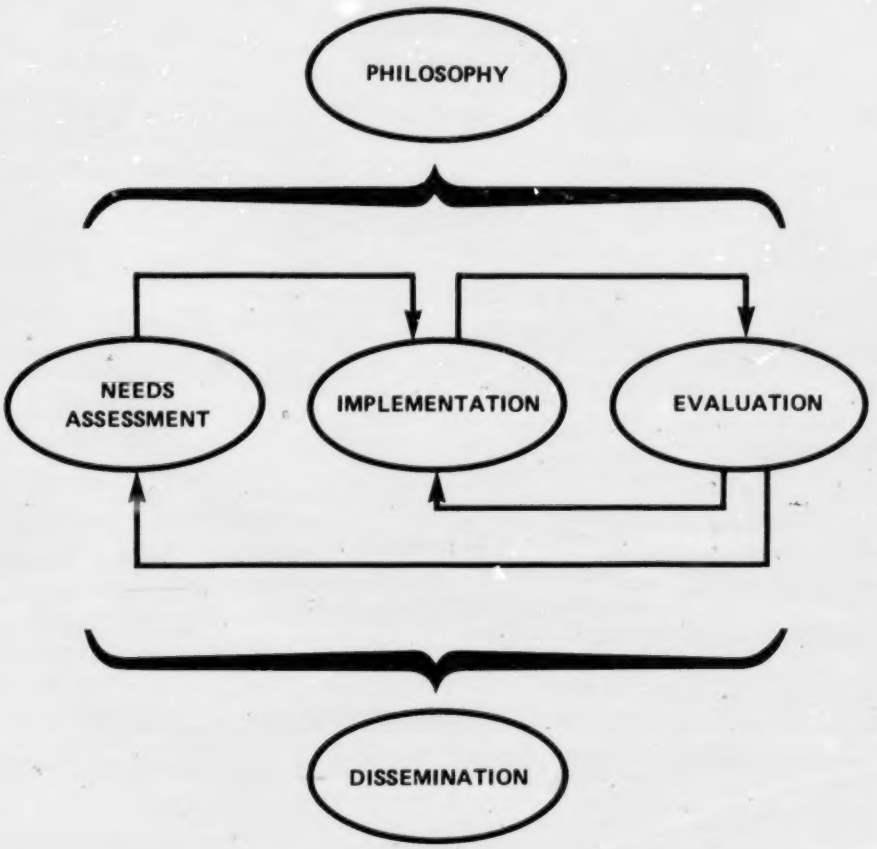
That is:

- How does the school define reading?
- What does the school expect of reading program participants (e.g., students, school staffs, school administrators)?
- Who should be provided the services of the reading program?
- How should students be organized to receive reading instruction (e.g., homogeneous or heterogeneous grouping, graded or non-graded classrooms)?
- What instructional approaches should be used (e.g., phonics, psycholinguistic, language experience)?
- How will decisions which affect the reading program be made and by whom?

Graphic representations of the relationship between a local school's philosophy pertaining to the reading program and the four steps of the "School Approach" model are presented on the following pages.

GUIDELINES:

TOWARDS EXCELLENCE IN READING PROGRAMS



GUIDELINES:
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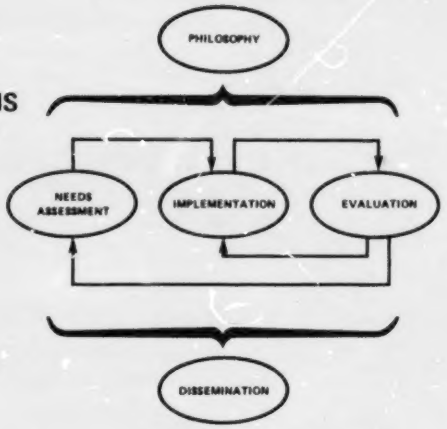


NEEDS ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

1. Identify the status (the "what is") of the reading program, including reading problems and program strengths.
2. Determine and make public the required and desirable solutions (the "what should be") regarding the reading program.
3. Identify alternative solution strategies to resolve identified reading problems.
4. Select solution strategies.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

5. Diagnose reading behaviors of students.
6. Prescribe instruction for students to remove reading deficiencies.
7. Personalize instruction to meet the reading needs, strengths, and interests of individual students.
8. Provide continuous opportunity for students to learn to read in all subjects.
9. Match instructional facilities/materials/equipment to the reading needs/interests of students.
10. Implement proficiency standards in reading for all students.
11. Provide inservice education to school staffs which will enable them to perform specified instructional and management tasks pertinent to the local reading program.
12. Modify, if necessary, the reading program to ensure continuous progress in meeting established reading objectives.

EVALUATION GUIDELINES

13. Develop a comprehensive evaluation plan.
14. Implement evaluation activities according to plan.

DISSEMINATION GUIDELINES

15. Develop a comprehensive dissemination of information plan.
16. Disseminate reading program information according to plan.
17. Use feedback to bring about change and program renewal.

GUIDELINES: TOWARDS EXCELLENCE IN READING PROGRAMS

NEEDS ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

Guideline 1:

IDENTIFY THE STATUS (THE "WHAT IS" OF THE READING PROGRAM, INCLUDING READING PROBLEMS AND PROGRAM STRENGTHS.

- What information is the school gathering on students, program organization, school staffs, parents, and the community?
- What basic reading skills are students learning?
- How is the school determining that students have acquired expected reading behaviors?
- How is the school demonstrating that reading is of value?
- What is the school doing to ensure that students make continuous progress in reading?
- What opportunities is the school providing students to apply reading skills in everyday life situations?
- What competencies do school staffs have that enable them to plan, implement, and evaluate the reading program?
- How are school staffs using their competencies in teaching reading?
- What is the school doing to ensure that school staffs have continuous opportunities for inservice education which increases knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for teaching reading?
- How are instructional materials, equipment, funds, and facilities used in the reading program (e.g., libraries, resource centers)?

Guideline 2:

DETERMINE AND MAKE PUBLIC THE REQUIRED AND DESIRABLE SOLUTIONS (THE "WHAT SHOULD BE") REGARDING THE READING PROGRAM.

- Who should be involved in determining required and desirable solutions which the reading program will address (e.g., school site council, parents, school administrators)?
- What do California laws, regulations, and local governing board of education policies require regarding solutions to reading problems?
- What information should the school gather on students, program organization, school staffs, parents, and the community to plan, implement, and evaluate the reading program?
- What basic reading skills should the school expect students to learn at different developmental levels (e.g., word recognition, identification of main ideas, making inferences, drawing conclusions, interpreting graphs, using information sources such as newspapers)?
- How should the school assess student reading behaviors?
- How should the school communicate to students that reading is of value to them?
- How should the school provide students opportunities to make continuous progress in reading?
- How should the school provide students opportunities to apply reading skills in everyday situations (e.g., using the library, reading newspapers)?
- What tasks should school staffs perform in order to plan, implement, and evaluate the reading program?

- How should the school provide school staffs continuous opportunities to improve knowledge and skills necessary for teaching reading?

- How should school staffs be supported in teaching students how to read (e.g., with counseling, health, and other auxiliary services)?

- How should the school use instructional materials, equipment, funds, and facilities in teaching students how to read?

- How should the school inform all participants in the educational process, including the general public, of the required and desirable solutions to reading problems?

Guideline 3: **IDENTIFY ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION STRATEGIES TO RESOLVE IDENTIFIED READING PROBLEMS.**

- What should the school do to ensure that all reasonable approaches for teaching students how to read have been identified (e.g., phonics, language experience, psycholinguistic approaches)?

- Which of the identified approaches should the school consider for resolving student reading problems?

Guideline 4: **SELECT SOLUTION STRATEGIES.**

- Who should be involved in selecting solution strategies to resolve reading problems?

- What should the school do to identify program strengths and constraints which affect the selection of solution strategies (e.g., responsiveness of school staff, availability of funds, staff competencies, community support)?

- What criteria should the school use in ranking solution strategies for program implementation?

- What measurable program objectives should be established for students and school staff?

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

Guideline 5: **DIAGNOSE READING BEHAVIORS OF STUDENTS.**

- How can the school determine the abilities and deficiencies of students in areas such as oral language, word recognition, vocabulary, comprehension, and reading rate (e.g., by administering diagnostic tests, by observing students as they read)?
- How can the school assess the attitudes and values which students have toward reading (e.g., by administering attitude surveys, by interviewing students, parents, and school staffs)?
- How can the school ensure that reading diagnostic information is disseminated to those individuals responsible for improving students' reading skills?

Guideline 6: **PRESCRIBE INSTRUCTION FOR STUDENTS TO REMOVE READING DEFICIENCIES.**

- How can the school ensure that reading prescriptions are based on diagnostic findings?
- How can the school ensure that reading prescriptions promote positive attitudes and value toward reading?
- How can the school provide inservice training which will ensure that school staffs are able to plan reading activities which meet the interests and needs of individual students?

Guideline 7: **PERSONALIZE INSTRUCTION TO MEET THE READING NEEDS, STRENGTHS, AND INTERESTS OF INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS.**

- How can the school ensure that reading activities are implemented in ways that meet the needs/interests of individual students in areas such as oral language, word recognition skills, vocabulary, critical thinking, and reading comprehension?

- How can the school ensure that the individual student is provided opportunities to apply reading skills in everyday life situations such as using reference books, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and newspapers?

- How can the school ensure that reading instruction takes into account the individual student's learning style, language dominance, cultural background, and other personal factors?

Guideline 8:

PROVIDE CONTINUOUS OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS TO LEARN TO READ IN ALL SUBJECTS.

- How can the school ensure that all students make continuous progress in learning basic/advanced reading skills in such areas as word recognition, comprehension, skimming, scanning, and reading technical/scientific materials?

- How can the school ensure that all students make continuous growth and progress in reading in all subjects (e.g., mathematics, science, social studies, the fine arts)?

Guideline 9:

MATCH INSTRUCTIONAL FACILITIES/MATERIALS/EQUIPMENT TO THE READING NEEDS/INTERESTS OF STUDENTS

- What processes and criteria can the school use in selecting instructional materials/equipment which meet the interests and learning styles of each student?

- How can the school ensure that instructional facilities/materials/equipment are used to meet the needs/interests of various students, such as limited and non-English speaking, culturally different, and mentally gifted?

- Who can the school involve in selecting or developing facilities/materials/equipment which meet the needs/interests of students (e.g., parents, teachers, reading specialists, school site council, principals, students)?

- How can the school provide an environment which is conducive to students learning how to read?

Guideline 10: **IMPLEMENT PROFICIENCY STANDARDS IN READING FOR ALL STUDENTS.**

- How can the school use local governing board of education adopted proficiency standards to promote excellence in reading for all students?
- How can the school implement locally adopted reading proficiency standards for students with learning handicaps and disabilities and for limited and non-English speaking students?
- How can the school assist students who do not pass locally adopted reading proficiency tests (e.g., by planning reading instructional alternatives which meet the individual student's needs, capabilities, and aspirations)?
- How can the school ensure that locally adopted minimum proficiency standards are not interpreted as maximum expectations of student reading behaviors?
- How can the school ensure that locally adopted minimum proficiency standards are administered in ways which challenge students to achieve their highest potential?

Guideline 11: **PROVIDE INSERVICE EDUCATION TO SCHOOL STAFFS WHICH WILL ENABLE THEM TO PERFORM SPECIFIED INSTRUCTIONAL AND MANAGEMENT TASKS PERTINENT TO THE LOCAL READING PROGRAM.**

- How can the school ensure that the inservice program takes into account the identified strengths and needs of individual staff members?
- How can the school prepare school staffs to teach to the reading needs/interests of individual students (e.g., lectures, teacher observations, demonstration teachers, and micro-teaching)?

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES (Continued)

Guideline 12: **MODIFY, IF NECESSARY, THE READING PROGRAM/PLAN TO ENSURE CONTINUOUS PROGRESS IN MEETING ESTABLISHED READING OBJECTIVES.**

- What benchmarks should the school use in determining if the local reading program activities are being implemented according to plan?
- How should the school determine if the implementation of the reading program has deviated from plan (e.g., by using feedback from groups such as teachers, parents, and students)?
- What can the school do to provide the flexibility needed to make program modifications which will ensure successful implementation?

EVALUATION GUIDELINES

Guideline 13: **DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION PLAN.**

- How can the school ensure that evaluation determines the extent to which planned reading program activities are implemented (e.g., by establishing evaluation objectives pertaining to staff development and diagnostic/instructional activities)?
- How can the school ensure that evaluation determines the extent to which identified needs and established reading program objectives are met (e.g., by establishing evaluation objectives pertaining to students' required and desirable reading behaviors)?
- How can the school involve individuals such as parents, teachers, school site council members, and students in the evaluation of the local reading program?
- How can school staffs acquire knowledge and skills which they need to perform assigned evaluation tasks (e.g., by participating in conferences, workshops, college courses)?

EVALUATION GUIDELINES (Continued)

- Which criteria can be used in selecting/developing/adopting assessment instruments suitable for evaluating the reading program, including the efforts of students and school staffs?

Guideline 14: **IMPLEMENT EVALUATION ACTIVITIES ACCORDING TO PLAN.**

- How can the school determine the kind and availability of the evaluation data to be collected from students, teachers, parents, and others?
- Who will collect the required evaluation data at specified times?
- How can the school ensure that evaluation information will be accessible and used by school staffs (e.g., to revise inservice training, to redesign diagnostic procedures, to change instructional emphasis in the classroom)?
- What evaluation questions will be answered in the analysis of the evaluation data?
- What procedures, including techniques of statistical analysis, can the school use to analyze the evaluation data collected from students, teachers, parents, and others?
- How can the school report evaluation findings and results to interested groups (e.g., parents, students, local governing boards of education, state educational agencies) in understandable formats?

DISSEMINATION GUIDELINES

Guideline 15: **DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION PLAN.**

- What kind of reading program information will be disseminated and to what audiences?
- Who will be responsible for disseminating reading program information at specified times and/or as requested?

DISSEMINATION GUIDELINES (Continued)

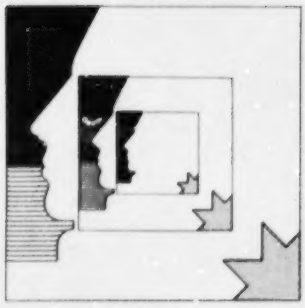
- What strategies, formats, and methods can the school use to disseminate reading program information within and outside the local school community?

Guideline 16: **DISSEMINATE READING PROGRAM INFORMATION ACCORDING TO PLAN.**

- How can the school meet target dates for the development and distribution of program materials and information?
- How can the school ensure that reading program information is disseminated to audiences both inside and outside the local school community?

Guideline 17: **USE FEEDBACK TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE AND PROGRAM RENEWAL.**

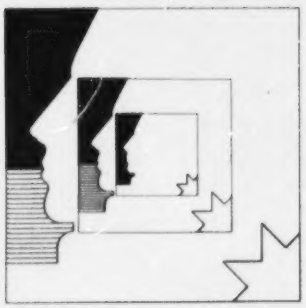
- How can the school use the information received from dissemination audiences to make required and desirable modifications of the local reading program?
- How can the school use the information received from dissemination audiences to promote the use of effective reading practices outside the local school community?



EPILOGUE

The focus of *Guidelines: Towards Excellence in Reading Programs* was to provide a goal orientation toward planning, implementing, managing, and evaluating local reading programs. First, the 17 guidelines and concomitant questions were presented to stimulate critical thought and to facilitate analysis of the many problems and issues that confront school staffs in their efforts to improve student reading achievement. Second, it was hoped that the *Guidelines* would serve as examples of approaches that school staffs could consider in addressing reading problems identified in the local schools. Regarding the latter, it was not intended that the *Guidelines* be construed as specific prescriptions for preventing and correcting the reading disabilities of individual students. Other documents that stress instructional techniques and procedures for classroom use will be included in future materials that the California State Department of Education will disseminate statewide. Lastly, it was not intended that the *Guidelines* would be used by school administrators and others as criteria for judging the performances of school staffs. In fact, using them as criteria for judging would be subverting the intended use of the *Guidelines.*

It is expected that school staffs will use the *Guidelines* wisely; and by doing so, the school staffs will find them to be a helpful tool in planning, implementing, and managing local reading programs.



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